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CIRCULAR LETTER,
OF
His Lordship, the Bishop of Ottawa.

To the Reverend Clergy of His Diocese.

REV. SIR,

As it was impossible for us to forward to you, at the proper time, the Pastoral Letter of the Fathers of the Fifth Council of the Province of Quebec, We now hasten to send it to you, in order that you may make its contents known to the Faithful committed to your care. We would have been happy to have consecrated the Diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on the Sunday following that Festival, in accordance with the wishes of all the Hierarchy of the ecclesiastical Province of Quebec, but circumstances rendered our so doing impossible. Like us, you and all the Faithful will appreciate and value the honor which is conferred on every parish and family by being thus consecrated in so solemn and public a manner to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which has so clearly loved the world, and outside whose loving embrace no salvation is to be

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found. As you are well aware, there never has been a time when it was more urgently needed than the present to seek refuge in this Sanctuary of Love, in order to guard against and remove from our firesides and our loved country the dangers which may spring up to threaten them, and to gain for ourselves those graces, without the aid of which it is impossible for us to pass safely through this life, so full of miseries and difficulties. All true Christians will understand this necessity; and we feel convinced that all fathers of families will hasten, with eagerness, to consecrate, in an especial manner, their homes and their children to this Divine Heart of Jesus. It will be a great source of joy to us to find all embrace this devotion with a holy enthusiasm, and each parish will do itself honor in accepting it with all the ardour and love it deserves. We strongly urge upon you, Rev. Sir, to establish, in your parish, the confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in conformity with the Statutes, which we will forward to you whenever you desire them. This means is the most efficacious to conserve and strengthen the faith of the Catholics of this Diocese, which is so dear to us.

The Pastoral Letter of the Fathers of the Council is too lengthy to be read at one time to your people. We urge you, therefore, to divide it in such a manner as to make it the text of your instructions on several consecutive Sundays. The great truths contained in the Pastoral Letter, so clear, and, at the same time, so profound, cannot fail to strikingly impress the Faithful, who cannot remain indifferent observers of the great questions which agitate the world, and which have an important connection with the eternal salvation of souls. The actual state of the Church, the cruel persecutions which she is made to undergo, and the shameful treatment to which the Sovereign Head of the Church, the Saintly and Immortal Pius IX, is subjected, make it a duty imperative on us to recall to the minds of the people the important truth that the Divine Saviour chose the Apostle Peter to be the infallible ground-work of the indefectible Church which

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He came on earth to establish. We are all living members of that Church, and everything that menaces her welfare should affect us most sensibly. On this subject we cannot speak in a more touching manner than does the Pastoral Letter of the Fathers of the Council. It remains simply for us to impress this point on your attention.

The question of education is also one which should deeply interest us all. There is nothing of greater importance than that the children of the Faithful should be reared up in a Christian manner. The system of mixed schools is full of danger for the peace of families and the future of the country. It is to the faith of the Church, more than to aught else, that we owe our strength, and it is she alone who can maintain Canada in a holy independence, which other nations may well envy. Let us, therefore, unite our efforts to alienate from ourselves the dangers which threaten us, and to defend the honor of our country as well as that of our holy religion. With the Fathers of the Council, We cannot too deeply impress on you the necessity of warning parents against the danger of exposing the eternal interests of the children with which God has blessed them,—under the pretext of advancing their material interests, which should never be placed in the balance against their eternal welfare.

Another subject is brought under your attention in the Pastoral Letter of the Fathers of the Council. You should be careful to instruct your people on their duties in the time of elections. The honor of the Catholic body is deeply involved in this question. The Faithful should be taught that it is a grievous fault to vote against their consciences, and that it is a shameful as well as a dishonorable act to sell a vote for money, or any other equivalent consideration. Catholics who render themselves guilty of this crime are unworthy of appearing in the House of God, for their act is calculated to cast a slur and a disgrace upon the whole Catholic body, and to expose their religion and their country to dangers which we are all interested in warding off.

The Pastoral Letter of the Fathers also offer pregnant texts on the subjects of emigration from the country, luxury and intemperance—evils which we must, at all cost, combat and remove from our midst, if our people would not be degraded to the lowest ranks and become the slaves of others. These subjects require your earnest attention, as besides higher considerations, material interests, the prosperity of the country and the peace of families, are most intimately wound up with them. It is of the greatest importance that you should impress this on your people.

We have appointed Sunday, the 6th July next, the Feast of the Precious Blood of our Lord, as the day on which shall take place the Solemn Consecration of the Diocese, the Parish, the Communities and families to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, conformably to the Pastoral Letter of the Fathers of the Council. You will find in the letter itself all the instructions regarding the ceremony, and we earnestly desire that you shall give to it all your attention and render so important a ceremony as solemn as possible.

We hope to be able ourselves, surrounded by our Clergy of the City, to consecrate the Diocese and the City of Ottawa in our Cathedral, on the day we have above mentioned, and we are convinced that the Catholic population of this the first City of our Diocese, will, on that occasion, manifest the same ardour and enthusiasm which they have always manifested, whenever there has been question of giving expression to the feelings of religion which animate them.

Given at our Episcopal Residence at Ottawa, under our Hand and Seal, and Countersigned by our Secretary, this twenty-fourth day of June, 1873.

+ JOSEPH EUGENE,
Bishop of Ottawa.

By Command
John L. O. Connor, D.D.,
Secretary.

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